

Ditchley  
Northumberland County  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-308

HABS  
VA  
67-DITCH,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Virginia

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Eugene Bradbury, Architect in Charge  
Grace Securities Building, Richmond, Virginia

HABS

VA

67-DITCH

1-

DITCHLEY (Residence)  
Kilmarnock Vicinity, Northumberland County, Virginia

Owner: Mrs. Alfred I. Du Pont

Date of Erection:

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Kendall Lee (owner)

Present Condition: Excellent

Number of Stories: Central portion two stories and basement  
with one story wings on each side

Materials of Construction: Brick

Other Existing Records:

Additional Data: Ditchley, situated between Prentice Creek and the southern branch of Dividing Creek, was established by Hancock Lee. It was named for a Lee estate near Oxford, England. The present brick mansion was built, about 1752, by Hancock Lee's grandson, Kendall Lee. It is of two storeys, spacious, and massively built--an interesting landmark, the abode of a long line of Lees and Balls. Nearby is the old cemetery in which the Lees and their allies, the Balls, are buried. Here the tomb of Hancock Lee may be seen. (The inscription says he died "25th May, Anno Domo 1729," but this is an error; his will was probated at a Northumberland court July 20, 1709). The Lees of Ditchley intermarried with the Balls of Bewdley and Ditchley, by purchase or exchange of property, however, became a Ball home. (Historic Northern Neck of Virginia - H. Ragland Eubank)

Ditchley looks upon the Chesapeake Bay. About the year 1647 Colonel Richard Lee, the first of the famous Lee family in Virginia, settled on a plantation at Dividing Creek, Northumberland County, which he named Ditchley. He was succeeded there by his seventh son, Hancock Lee (1653-1709), a prominent man in his day, whose first wife was Mary, daughter of the Honorable William Kendall, of "the East-

ern Shore", and his second, Elizabeth, daughter of the "converted" Puritan, Isaac Allerton II, and granddaughter of those stern New England worthies the first Isaac Allerton and "Elder" William Brewster. Hancock Lee was buried at Ditchley, where his tomb may still be seen.

The original Ditchley house is said to have dated from about 1687, but the present homestead, situated about two hundred yards from the site of its predecessor, was built by Kendall Lee, grandson of Hancock Lee, about the year 1765.

Ditchley remained in the Lee family until 1789, when William Lee sold it to James Ball, Jr. (1718-1789), who had married said Lee's aunt, Lettice Lee (1731-1811), and it has ever since been the property of the well-known family of Ball. A recent owner was Captain James F. Ball, a gallant officer in the Confederate Army.

There is still in use at Wycomoco Church, Northumberland Parrish, a communion cup bearing the inscription, "Ex Dono Hancock Lee to Ye Parish of Lee, 1711." (Historic Virginia Homes and Churches - R. A. Lancaster)

Author: Eugene Brodhead

Approved: W W 5/20/41